

Task Force on Faculty Evaluation for Promotion, Tenure, Post-Tenure Review, and Hiring Gap Analysis Report March 20, 2009

Introduction

In April 2008, Provost Driscoll established the Faculty Task Force on the Evaluation of Faculty Work for Promotion, Tenure, Post-tenure Review, and Hiring. The Task Force's charge was to lead the institutional effort to consider anew our shared definitions and expectations for faculty work. One of the key tasks was to review the current policies and procedures and develop a description and gap analysis between what we want to achieve and what the current system delivers. This work was to be guided by a set of interconnected principles:

- 1) Grounded in the context of current national discussions of best practices in faculty work and peer review;
- 2) Learning and engagement will be the unifying themes of a shared definition of quality that reflects a scholarly approach to all aspects of faculty roles, and values the full range of faculty work and talent reflected in UAA's unique mission; and
- 3) The resulting guidelines must provide unity, consistency and transparency to all facets of the faculty evaluation system, while being flexible enough to be tailored to specific disciplines, departments, schools, colleges, and campuses.

Through the summer and fall of 2008, the Task Force gathered and analyzed a variety of data in order to complete the gap analysis. This included: a) a scan of the current literature on faculty evaluation and peer review; b) examination of evaluation processes from a variety of universities; c) content review of current UA, UAA and college evaluation policies and procedures; d) current Collective Bargaining Agreements; e) data from the faculty review process; and f) faculty perspectives gathered through sixteen Faculty Forums.

The general conclusion we have drawn from our analysis is that the policies and procedures of the current faculty evaluation system are unlikely to enable us to reach our goal of being a distinguished university of first choice widely recognized for the quality of its contributions to Alaska's culture, society, and economy. The existing university-wide policy framework was initially written in 1988 and has not been substantially revised since then. As such, it is not clearly aligned with our institutional mission and strategic plan, and thus does not effectively guide and focus the vast array of faculty talent and scholarly work toward our goals. Our analysis also indicates that the existing evaluation criteria lack the clarity and transparency required to provide the sufficiently clear boundaries necessary for rendering consistent professional judgments. Finally, the current literature on best practices suggests that an effective evaluation system should both support continuous faculty development and improvement, as well as serve as a rigorous and fair basis for personnel decisions. Based on our analysis of both existing policy and practice, we have concluded that the current system serves neither of these ends well at present. Though we have concluded that there are significant issues with the current system, we also identified a number of existing institutional supports and cultural characteristics that can serve as the scaffolding supports for crafting a new faculty evaluation system.

Summary of Findings: Existing Supports and Gaps in Faculty Evaluation

The current national dialogue on best practices in faculty evaluation and peer review served as the analytic framework for this report. This included a variety of research and theoretically based peer-reviewed articles, monographs and edited books, policy statements and recommendations from national associations and disciplinary societies, and policy documents from universities that had undertaken significant revisions in their faculty review systems based on recommendations from the research.ⁱⁱ From this literature review we identified four (4) key components of effective faculty evaluation systems that are future-oriented:

- 1) System is aligned with institutional mission;
- 2) System includes unifying definitions and expectations of faculty work, yet is sensitive to disciplinary and individual faculty differences;
- 3) System policy structure and assessment is appropriate and perceived to be fair and workable; and

4) System articulates characteristics of quality (scholarly) work.

Within each of these four components there exist a number of 'best practices' that support the design, development and implementation of an effective system. For each of these best practices we have outlined supporting structures that currently exist within UAA upon which a new system can be built, as well as existing gaps and issues that will need to be addressed.

Aligned with Institutional Mission

The examination and evaluation of faculty work must be done within the context of the explicit goals of the institution, embodied in the mission and strategic plan. Arguably, the most valuable resource of the university has for enacting its mission is the time, talent, and expertise of the faculty. An evaluation system aligned with the mission provides faculty with a clear set of expectations for focusing their work, and continuing their development and growth. In this way, while individual faculty may pursue individualized professional pathways based on their unique talents, the collective work of the faculty supports the achievement of the institutional mission.

Best Practice	Existing UAA Supports	Gap/Issues
Clear, operational mission and vision	Revised mission and Strategic Plan 2017	Faculty evaluation policies created in 1988; not aligned with current mission and strategic plan.
College and units have clearly established goals that are aligned with university mission and goals.	Representative faculty examples from across units reflect work clearly aligned with UAA mission and strategic plan. Colleges and units in process of developing goals aligned to strategic plan.	
Department and unit level policies aligned with university mission and vision		College and unit policies not explicitly aligned with current mission and plan. Recent revisions in college and unit policies have lead to increasing divergence in the establishment of criteria for quality work.
College and unit level policy documents describe and give examples of how the institution's criteria and guidelines apply to the characteristics and circumstances of that unit and its faculty.		Policy documents vary in clarity and specificity. Most were created before the development of the strategic plan and do not explicitly address these linkages.
Clearly articulated explanation of the purpose of faculty evaluation and peer review.		There is not a shared understanding of the purposes of faculty evaluation, the role of peer review, and why we do it.
Alignment and articulation of all facets of faculty evaluation (hiring to post-tenure)	Post-tenure review is an accepted component of faculty evaluation process.	There is not a structured or systemic approach that explicitly recognizes hiring as the initial step in the evaluation process. Perception by some faculty that post-tenure review process is not rigorous, and does not support continued faculty improvement as it has neither positive nor negative consequences. Annual reviews and not linked year-to-year to establish a cohesive articulation and developmental path.

Unifying Definitions of Dimensions of Faculty Work, Yet Sensitive to Disciplinary and Individual Faculty Differences

Within and across disciplines there are differences in what faculty do, how they do it, and the language they use to describe their work. Individuals also bring different strengths, perspectives, experiences, and talents to their faculty role. Applying an identical set of criteria for all faculty members is unrealistic and can serve to undermine the ultimate quality of an academic unit and the institution as a whole. An effective evaluation system should, therefore, recognize and honor the inherent diversity of faculty work, with the goal of knitting the unique talents of each individual into a cohesive and synergistic whole. It should also recognize and support opportunity for differential emphasis and interests over the arc of the career. However, in order to accomplish this outcome, the faculty evaluation system must include agreed upon definitions and shared understandings of the scope and parameters of the dimensions of faculty work (e.g. teaching, research/creative activity, scholarship, service, engagement).

Defining scholarship and scholarly work is a critically important aspect of crafting a future-oriented faculty evaluation system, as scholarship forms the unifying foundation of the system. Since the 1990 publication of Ernie Boyer’s landmark work *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*ⁱⁱⁱ, there has been much discussion, reconsideration, and expanding definitions of faculty roles, and the breadth and scope of scholarly work. Boyer expressed a growing concern that the academy’s implicit designation of (so-called) traditional research as the most (or only) important measure of academic success had led to a serious disconnect from the growing needs of society the academy was meant to serve. Over the last twenty years, others have continued and built upon this critique. While not questioning the notion that advancing the boundaries of knowledge remains an important part of the work of the university, these authors argue that the mission of the university is more than just discovering new knowledge. Therefore, the characteristics of scholarship are best understood to be a part of all aspects of faculty work. “Scholarly work” has four components:^{iv}

- 1) Advancement of knowledge—original research;
- 2) Integration of knowledge—synthesizing and reintegrating knowledge, revealing new patterns of meaning, and new relationships between the parts and the whole;
- 3) Application of knowledge—professional practice directly related to an individual’s scholarly specialization; and
- 4) Transformation of knowledge through teaching—including pedagogical content knowledge and discipline-specific educational theory, sometimes referred to as the “scholarship of teaching and learning.”

Best Practice	Existing UAA Supports	Gap/Issues
Clear policy definitions of the various dimensions of faculty work (teaching, research/creative activity, service, engagement)	<i>Definitions of Community Engagement, Curricular Engagement, Community-based Research, and Engaged Service</i> , adopted by Faculty Senate 2007. <i>Four-part Teaching Evaluation Model</i> , recommendation approved by Faculty Senate, 2008.	Policy definitions of the dimensions of faculty work are vague and incomplete. Faculty expressed concern over lack of clarity in current definitions of dimensions. Different value placed on the dimensions of faculty work across the different levels of review.
Clear definition of quality criteria and standards for dimensions of faculty work.	Faculty Forum data showed consensus on a set of common characteristics of quality work and values that cut across the three dimensions of teaching, research/creative activity, and service.	These characteristics of quality work have not yet been reviewed and accepted by the entire faculty, and thus are not codified in the review process. There is evidence that the recognition and valuing of these characteristics is unevenly recognized and rewarded across units and colleges.

Best Practice (cont)	Existing UAA Supports	Gap/Issues
Clear definition of quality criteria and standards for dimensions of faculty work. (continued)	The characteristics and values outlined in the Faculty Forum data are clearly reflective of UAA's mission and strategic plan, as well as those of the individual community campuses. (see section <i>Articulates Characteristics of Quality Work</i>)	Faculty expressed concern that quality work they perceive as aligned with the mission and strategic plan is not rewarded or recognized by their peers and college/unit administrators and leaders.
Expanded definition of "scholarship" resonant with recent discourse within and among various professional associations.	<p>UAA Mission and Strategic Plan provide a framework for supporting faculty work across a range of diverse faculty talents and scholarly activities.</p> <p><i>Definitions of Community Engagement, Curricular Engagement, Community-based Research, and Engaged Service, adopted by Faculty Senate 2007.</i></p> <p><i>Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Initiative</i></p> <p><i>Undergraduate Research Initiative</i></p>	<p>Faculty expressed concern that new forms of scholarship/scholarly work was not valued broadly within the institution, nor in the review process.</p> <p>There have not been broadly held discussions of an expanded definition of scholarship; and no consensus exists on which to formulate policies.</p> <p>College and unit definitions of scholarship and faculty work do not generally reflect an expanded definition.</p>
Evaluation system honors the inherent functional differences in discipline-based work and the language used to describe the work.	Faculty and administration generally accept this concept in principle, and the existing policy framework allows for the establishment of college and unit specified criteria.	Longitudinal data on faculty evaluation actions suggests that the inherent differences that arise from the discipline and the context in which faculty work are not well understood or accounted for within the evaluation system.
Value local and regional work equally with work of national and international scope.		
Accounts for the emergence of new and developing disciplines, and the increasing tendency toward interdisciplinary and collaborative work.	Collaboration, teamwork, and interdisciplinary work were consistently identified as necessary for scholarly engagement with 21 st century issues and challenges, and for effectively supporting student learning and academic success.	Expressed concern that respect for and valuing of cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary intellectual work (whether teaching, research or service) is not wide-spread among faculty or administration.
System honors the varied contexts of faculty work (discipline, college/unit goals, location)		<p>There were a significant number of mixed results cases, occurring mostly in decisions related to promotion and/or tenure.</p> <p>Significantly, a high percentage of the mixed reviews occurred in cases from the community campuses.</p>

Best Practices (cont)	Existing UAA Supports	Gap/Issues
Recognizes and supports integration of work across dimensions.	Emphasis was placed on the integrative nature of faculty work across the dimensions of teaching, service, and research/creative activity.	Current system often forces faculty to arbitrarily force cross-cutting activities into one of the three recognized dimensions, or does not reward or value such work.
Provides flexibility in percent effort given to various dimensions of faculty work, and allows for shifting emphasis across dimensions of work over career arc.		Many colleges, department, or units have few faculty members and cannot consistently provide for flexibility. Current practices regarding the development and assignment of workload effort are not based on summative evaluation of past productivity or past performance and accomplishments in the three dimensions.
Weight given to evaluation of individual dimensions of work commensurate with percent effort during period of review.		Faculty Forum participants report that reviewers have questioned or critiqued workload distributions, responsibilities, or percent effort devoted to a dimension even though it reflected an administratively approved workload agreement. Current policy and practice does not include the use of established parameters for weighting dimensions.
Provides for appropriate flexibility in tenure timeline (tenure clock extension or tenure clock stop provisions).	UnAc contract includes this provision.	Existing contracts with faculty unions are not consistent. Explicit policies on tenure timeline flexibility are not included in the current handbook or faculty evaluation documents.

System Policy Structure and Assessment is Appropriate and Perceived to be Fair and Workable

Although universities resemble each other in many aspects, each has a specific and unique mission, is situated in and serves different communities, and has unique and particularized organizational structures. In order to be workable, the faculty evaluation system must be responsive to the specific contextual characteristics of the institution. Part of being responsive requires providing sufficient structure and clarity to inspire confidence and a sense of fairness among all members of the university community.

Best Practices	Existing UAA Supports	Gaps/Issues
Comprehensive guidance document provided for faculty and administrators.		Existing handbook is decades old. Guidance policies reside in a variety of policy documents that are not co-located at present.
Selected dossier tailored around specific faculty responsibilities.		Files tend to be all-encompassing collections of varied documents focused on each of the three dimensions of work (teaching, research/creative activity, service) rather than selective items focused on key responsibilities and accomplishments.
Focused on in-depth evaluation of representative items and activities.	Faculty Forum data indicate the desire to create the structure for a more selective dossier.	Current practice generally focuses on documenting and evaluating participation in activities and accounting for workload hours, rather than an examination of representative examples of quality work.
Evaluation system stresses process of work as much as product.		Faculty Forum participants expressed concern that recognition is not given to the learning curve required for faculty when branching out, creating new programs, or implementing new pedagogies.

Best Practices (cont.)	Existing UAA Supports	Gaps/Issues
Evaluation system stresses process of work as much as product. (cont)		Annual reviews are generally not linked in any explicit and systematic way that would allow for the process of faculty work to be carefully documented and analyzed for evaluative purposes.
System stresses critical self-reflection and continuous professional growth and enhancement.	<p>Faculty Forum participants noted a direct link between professional development and the growth and enhancement of their work across the domains. They demonstrated implementation of new strategies, methods, and activities gleaned from a variety of professional development opportunities.</p> <p>Forum participants expressed the need for more critical reflection to be incorporated in any new faculty evaluation structures.</p>	<p>Existing self-review process does not necessarily lead to critical self-reflection as currently designed.</p> <p>Although faculty are asked to list their participation in professional development activities, there is no expectation to demonstrate positive impact, integration, or implementation of new ideas and skills based on those experiences.</p>
Separate exceptional and innovative activities from those that all faculty perform.	Faculty Forum participants advocated that evaluation processes recognize and give added value to faculty work that shows early adoption or innovation in instructional practices.	Existing focus generally is on documenting activities and input of time as a proxy for excellence.
Define acceptable data sources for each dimension, and for integrated work.	Some units and colleges have delineated acceptable sources of evidence in some dimensions.	There is not a shared agreement within the institution of the parameters of acceptable evidence for the different dimensions. Nor is there a definition or shared understanding of integrated work and the acceptable evidence for documenting such work.
Use multiple sources of data for each dimension and expand the diversity of artifacts and formats.		UAA does not yet have a strong “culture of evidence” related to faculty evaluation, and thus no clear policies on the use of multiple data sources.
Incorporate expert judgment of peers and colleagues, including colleagues outside of academia who have expertise and insight relevant to specific activities.	Policies allow for the inclusion of professional judgments by external academic peers.	While letters of support from colleagues outside of academia are often accepted, the inclusion of expert judgment and critique by such colleagues is not generally accepted or encouraged.
Train the evaluators to evaluate. Require training at regular intervals for all participants in evaluation system (applicant, review committee members, department chairs, dean) regarding ethical responsibilities, and appropriate application of institutional policies and evaluation criteria.	Faculty Service Office and the University-wide Faculty Review Committee, as well as some college/unit committees, have provided support sessions to assist faculty in preparing files.	Regular, focused, and consistent training for those participating in the process as evaluators (peer, Department Chair, administrator, Dean) is not currently available.

Best Practices (cont.)	Existing UAA Supports	Gaps/Issues
Provide clear and explicit feedback to faculty on performance; train evaluators in giving feedback.		Faculty Forum data indicates a lack of consistent, meaningful, and explicit feedback that is constructive and supports continued development. Faculty perceptions were that when corrective feedback was given, it was general in nature and not sufficiently explicit or supportive as to guide one's actions.
Review evaluation system on regular basis.		Current policy and practice does not include an explicit expectation and timeline for periodic review .

Articulates Characteristics of Quality (Scholarly) Work

As noted previously, defining scholarship and scholarly work is a critically important aspect of a faculty evaluation system. However, once the components or dimensions of scholarship have been delineated, there must also exist criteria for evaluating and judging the quality of a scholarly endeavor. The national dialogue regarding expanding the definition of scholarship included the tandem issue of assessing scholarship. Two of the more widely accepted and applied set of characteristics come from Diamond & Adams (1993), and Glassick, Huber, & Mearoff (1997).^v Taken together, these two frameworks constitute a model of 'best practice' for defining and assessing scholarly work.

Best Practices	Existing UAA Supports
Diamond & Adam (1993) <i>Recognizing Faculty Work</i>	Glassick, Huber & Mearoff (1997) <i>Scholarship Assessed</i> Characteristics of Quality Work from UAA Faculty Forums
Requires high level of discipline-related expertise	Personally meaningful; drew on passion, interests, allowed for autonomy. Grounded in current literature and knowledge-base in the disciplines or field. Connected personal expertise and interests to department, college, campus, or institutional mission or strategic plan. Connected to local, Alaska context; engaged with the community; focused on specific local need, applied learning/research.
Breaks new ground or is innovative	Identified a need or gap and took the initiative to resolve it. Required flexibility, willingness to take a risk, move into unknown or unfamiliar ground, or take up a challenge.
Can be replicated or elaborated	Engaged in a systematic approach; clear goals; and careful selection of actions/activities. Involved collaboration with others, internally and externally to UAA, including colleagues in the community. Took an interdisciplinary approach; expertise of others was necessary for attaining goal; tapped into and incorporated local resources and expertise in integrated and thoughtful way.
Has a process and results that can be documented	Effective presentations
Produces results that can be reviewed by peers	Reflective critique
	Activity "stretched" faculty member's knowledge, skills, understandings; Led to personal learning and growth; reflected on & learned from "failures" or missteps, and successes to apply to next project.

Best Practices (cont)		Existing UAA Supports (cont)
Diamond & Adam (1993) <i>Recognizing Faculty Work</i>	Glassick, Huber & Mearoff (1997) <i>Scholarship Assessed</i>	Characteristics of Quality Work from UAA Faculty Forums
Has significance and impact	Significant results	Had specific, identifiable positive impact or outcome. Had cascading effects; led to new initiatives, understandings, activities, or policies. Contributed to prestige of institution.

ⁱ The term “scholarly work” reflects the broad array of discipline-based pursuits encompassed within the teaching, research, and service dimensions of faculty work. The term is more fully discussed and defined later in this report.

ⁱⁱ Best practices represent a synthesis across a number of sources: E. Boyer (1990). *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; R.M. Diamond (1999), *Aligning Faculty Rewards with Institutional Mission: Statements, policies, and guidelines*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing; R. M. Diamond (1994) *Serving on Promotion and Tenure Committees*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing.; R. M. Diamond & B.E. Adams (1993). *Recognizing Faculty Work: Reward systems for the year 2000*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; J. Ellison & T.K. Eatman (2008). *Scholarship in Public: Knowledge creation and tenure policy at the engaged university*. *Imagining America*; C.E. Glassick, M. T. Huber, & G.I. Maeroff (1997), *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the professoriate*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass; E. R. Rice. (1991). *The New American Scholar: Scholarship and the purposes of the university*. *Metropolitan Universities Journal*, 1(4), 7-18.

ⁱⁱⁱ E. Boyer (1990). *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

^{iv} E. R. Rice. (1991). *The New American Scholar: Scholarship and the purposes of the university*. *Metropolitan Universities Journal*, 1(4), 7-18.

^v R. M. Diamond & B.E. Adams (1993). *Recognizing Faculty Work: Reward systems for the year 2000*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; C.E. Glassick, M. T. Huber, & G.I. Maeroff (1997), *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the professoriate*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.